

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /057 W

-----077859 260934Z /23

R 260746Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2825

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE MANILA 11483

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PBOR, MY, RP

SUBJECT: GOP OPTIMISM OVER SABAH SETTLEMENT

REF: (A) MANILA 11316, (B) MANILA 10985

1. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFFS JULY 25, DFA ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS ARMANDO MANALO EXPRESSED MARKED OPTIMISM THAT PHILIPPINES AND MALAYSIA WERE ON THEIR WAY TO SOLVING THEIR LONG-STANDING DISPUTE OVER SABAH. HE SAID HE WAS "VERY ENCOURAGED" BY THE RESULTS OF THE RECENT VISIT HERE OF SABAH CHIEF MINISTER HARRIS SALLEH. STRESSING THAT FINAL DECISION WOULD BE MADE BY PRESIDENT MARCOS IN CONCERT WITH MALAYSIAN LEADERS, MANALO RECALLED THAT MARCOS HAD OPPOSED THE PHILIPPINE CLAIM WHEN HE WAS A SENATOR DURING THE MACAPAGAL ADMINISTRATION. MANALO OPINED THAT THE PROBLEM FOR THE PHILIPPINES IS TO FIND A WAY TO RENOUNCE THE CLAIM WITHOUT LOSING TOO MUCH FACE. AS HAD HARRIS SALLEH DURING HIS VISIT TO MANILA (REFTEL B), MANALO DIVIDED THE SABAH PROBLEM INTO TWO COMPONENTS: FINANCIAL CLAIMS BY THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HEIRS OF THE LATE SULTAN OF SULU WHO CLAIMED SOVEREIGNTY OVER SABAH AND THE TERRITORIAL CLAIM OF THE PHILIPPINES. THE DETAILS OF ANY SETTLEMENT NEEDS TO SATISFY ALL PARTIES TO THE DISPUTE: MALAYSIA, THE PHILIPPINES AND THE SULTAN'S HEIRS.

2. COMMENT: MANALO'S GENUINE OPTIMISM IS ANOTHER SIGN THAT

MARCOS MAY INDEED BE PREPARED FINALLY TO SETTLE THE DISPUTE WITH MALAYSIA OVER SABAH. MARCOS MAY BE MOTIVATED BY THE COOPERATION ON MINDANAO HE HAS BEEN RECEIVING FROM MALAYSIA IN THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE (MANALO MENTIONED THIS COOPERATION IN A POSITIVE VEIN) AND BY THE RECENT MALAYSIAN PROMISE TO RESTRICT THE ABILITY OF MUSLIM REBELS TO USE SABAH AS A TRAINING AREA AND SANCTUARY (REFTEL A). ADDITIONALLY, A GOP RENUNCIATION OF THE CLAIM WOULD PROBABLY STRENGTHEN THE POSITION OF CURRENT SABAH CHIEF MINISTER HARRIS SALLEH VIS-A-VIS TUN MUSTAPHA, HARRIS SALLEH'S PREDECESSOR AND A STRONG SUPPORTER OF THE MNLF. NEITHER HARRIS SALLEH NOR MARCOS WOULD LIKE TO SEE MUSTAPHA REGAIN POWER IN SABAH. STULL

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Message Attributes

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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 26-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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